

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTORAL REVIEW WORKING GROUP

Wednesday, 6th January, 2016

Present: Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A C Balfour (Vice-Chairman), Cllr O C Baldock, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr P J Montague and Cllr A K Sullivan

Councillors Mrs S M Barker and B J Luker were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M A Coffin and Mrs T Dean

PART 2 - PRIVATE

ER 16/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

ER 16/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Review Working Group held on 18 March 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ER 16/3 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2016

The report of the Chief Executive gave details of proposed terms of reference for a Community Governance Review (CGR) of parish electoral arrangements following a request by Kings Hill Parish Council for a review of the boundaries between Kings Hill and East Malling and Larkfield parishes and Kings Hill and Wateringbury parishes.

The report set out the legislative requirements and statutory guidance for conducting a CGR, in particular that the Borough Council should have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review reflected the identities and interests of the community in that area and was effective and convenient. Consideration was given to the proposals put forward by Kings Hill Parish Council, those affecting the boundary with East Malling and Larkfield parish having been split into two areas for ease of reference and depicted as Area A1 and Area A2 on the map at Annex 1 to the report. The proposal affecting the boundary with Wateringbury parish was designated Area B.

Members considered that only Area A1 met the statutory criteria and that the Terms of Reference should reflect the recommendations set out at

section 1.5 of the report and be included accordingly in the public consultation. It was noted that no residential properties, and therefore registered electors, would be affected by the review.

The report concluded by giving details of the public consultation and timetable for the CGR.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) Area A1 be included in the formal Community Governance Review (CGR) with a proposal that the parish boundary be amended such that Area A1 be transferred from East Malling and Larkfield parish to Kings Hill parish;
- (2) Area A2 be included in the formal CGR with a proposal that Area A2 remain in East Malling and Larkfield parish;
- (3) Area B be included in the formal CGR with a proposal that Area B remain in Wateringbury parish;
- (4) the Terms of Reference set out at Annex 2 to the report be adopted for the purposes of the CGR;
- (5) the Draft Proposals set out at Annex 3 to the report be adopted and a formal consultation commenced; and
- (6) a further meeting of the Electoral Review Working Group be held following the consultation to determine the Final Proposals.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

ER 16/4 INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (UPDATE)

The report of the Chief Executive provided an update on the implementation of the Individual Electoral Registration (IER) programme. Details were given of the outcome of the first full annual canvass under IER following the Government's announcement that the transition to IER would end in November 2015. It was noted that everyone on the Register of Electors published on 1 December 2015 was IER registered.

The Chief Executive was confident that the Register of Electors was as accurate and complete as possible and media speculation of electors being denied the right to vote at the end of transition to IER unfounded within Tonbridge and Malling. Members were advised that the total number of electors removed from the Register was small, representing 1% of total electors, and followed a long-running and determined campaign to encourage and enable individuals to register to vote. The Electoral Registration team was commended for their efforts and achievement during a complicated and confusing process.

The meeting ended at 7.32 pm